

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT RANGOON 1441 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO

DEA HQS BANGKOK CHIANG MAI MANDALAY APR 24.

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE RANGOON 1441

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJ: OPERATION MOHEIN IV

REF: RANGOON 1368

SUMMARY: THE BURMESE TOOK A GROUP OF DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS TO VISIT ONE OF THE MOHEIN IV OPERATIONAL AREAS AND EXPLAINED RESULTS OF THE OPERATION THUS FAR. TEN REFINERY INSTALLATIONS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, 158 KG. OF OPIUM AND 594 GALLONS OF OPIUM SOLUTION HAVE BEEN SEIZED, A RECORD AMOUNT OF REFINING CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT WAS CAPTURED, AND AT LEAST 20 OF THE INSURGENTS/TRAFFICKERS WERE KILLED. WE BELIEVE THE OPERATION HAS ALREADY BEEN HIGHLY USEFUL IN DISRUPTING BORDER-AREA TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES. OCCUPATION OF LOI LEM AND DOI LANG IS SLATED TO CONTINUE FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER MONTH. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GUB ON APRIL 23 TOOK FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHES,

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JOURNALISTS, TWO THAI EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND TWO U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS (INCLUDING AMBASSADOR BEAN) TO THE MOHEIN IV OPERATIONAL AREA FOR BRIEFINGS, INSPECTION OF CAPTURED NARCOTICS AND EQUIPMENT, AND A VISIT TO ONE OF THE DESTROYED REFINERIES. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY PEOPLE'S POLICE FORCE DIRECTOR GENERAL U SHWE THAN, AND OTHER BURMESE OFFICIALS.

2. IN THE BRIEFINGS (AND IN A NEWSPAPER STORY PUBLISHED APRIL 24), THE BURMESE SAID THAT THEIR FORCES, UNDER COMMAND OF THE 88TH LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION, HAD MOUNTED ATTACKS ON 10 NARCOTICS REFINING INSTALLATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN GUARDED BY ABOUT 500 ARMED MEN. THE TRAFFICKING/INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED WERE THE SHAN UNITED ARMY, THE LO HSING MIN ORGANIZATION, THE LAHN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY, THE KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ARMY, THE SHAN STATES ARMY, AND THE CHINESE IRREGULAR FORCES (EX-KMT REMNANTS). THERE WERE 13 SEPARATE FIREFIGHTS IN WHICH AT LEAST 20 INSURGENTS WERE KILLED (BODY COUNT). ONE BURMA ARMY SOLDIER WAS KILLED AND EIGHT WERE WOUNDED.

3. THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL HAS BEEN CAPTURED DURING THE OPERATION THUS FAR:

A. RAW OPIUM - 158 KG.
B. OPIUM SOLUTION (IN PROCESS OF BEING REFINED) -- 594 GAL.
C. ETHER -- 374 LITRES
D. SULPHURIC ACID -- 500 GAL.
E. HYDROCHLORIC ACID -- 63 LITRES
F. ACETIC ACID -- 125 LITRES
G. PHENOL -- 315 LITRES
H. BLEACHING CARBONAL POWDER -- 180 KG.
I. METHYLATED SPIRIT -- 480 GAL.
J. CHLOROFORM -- 100 LITRES
K. AMMONIUM CHLORIDE -- 420 KG.
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L. SODIUM CARBONATE -- 500 KG.
M. REFINING EQUIPMENT (COOKING VATS, GLASSWARE, ETC.) -- 1336
PIECES
N. LIGHT MACHINE GUN -- 1
O. RIFLES -- 3
P. CARBINES -- 10
Q. REVOLVER -- 1
R. RADIOS -- 3
S. AMMUNITION -- LARGE QUANTITY

4. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT MOST OF THE TRAFFICKERS MADE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE INTO THAILAND, AND PROBABLY MANAGED TO EVACUATE MOST OF THEIR REFINED NARCOTICS. HOWEVER, THE OPERATION IS STILL CONTINUING, AND ADDITIONAL CACHES MAY BE FOUND. ALSO, BEFORE THEY END THE OPERATION THE BURMESE MAY STRIKE OTHER BORDER-AREA NARCOTICS TARGETS NOT YET COVERED. WE WERE INFORMED THAT THE OCCUPATION OF LOI LEM AND DOI LANG WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER MONTH.

5. WHILE IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT MOST OF THE TRAFFICKER/INSURGENT FORCES WERE NOT BROUGHT TO BATTLE AND THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO EVACUATE THEMSELVES AND MUCH OF THEIR PRODUCT TO THAILAND,

MOHEIN IV HAS ALREADY BEEN A MAJOR BLOW TO THE TRAFFICKERS. THE SEIZED OPIUM BEING PROCESSED COULD HAVE PRODUCED LARGE AMOUNTS OF HEROIN; THE CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT CAPTURED WILL BE DIFFICULT TO REPLACE; THE DISRUPTION TO TRAFFICKING PATTERNS PLUS THE DENIAL OF THIS SECTION OF THE BORDER TO THE TRAFFICKERS WILL CAUSE AT LEAST A TEMPORARY DROP IN THE PRODUCTION OF REFINED OPIATES; AND TRAFFICKERS ALL ALONG THE BORDER WILL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHERE THE NEXT ATTACK IN THIS CONTINUING OPERATION MAY FALL, BE MORE CAUTIOUS, AND ADOPT ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES.

6. WITH REGARD TO THAI-BURMESE COOPERATION, THE BURMESE ACKNOWLEDGED IN THEIR BRIEFING THAT THERE HAD BEEN LOCAL-LEVEL CONTACT WITH THE BORDER PATROL POLICE, AS A RESULT OF MINOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INCIDENTS ALONG THE BORDER, BUT VIGOROUSLY EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IS IN NO WAY A "JOINT OPERATION". ALSO, THEY WERE INDIRECTLY CRITICAL OF THE THAI FOR ALLOWING THE TRAFFICKERS REFUGE IN THAILAND. BEAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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